

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. In the final Office Action of June 5, 2003, the specification was objected to because of an informality. Claim 32 was objected to as being dependent upon a cancelled claim. Claims 17, 18, 20, 21, 27-29, 31-37, 39, 40, 46-48, and 50-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Sperling et al. in view of Korenage et al. Claims 19, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Sperling et al. in view of Sasada et al. Claims 23-26, 42-45, and 76-79 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Sperling et al. in view of Tokuda et al. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 22, 41, 80 and 81.

Claims 17-29, 31-48, 50-52, and 76-81 are pending in this application. Applicants have amended claims 17, 32, 36, and 39 to further clarify aspects of Applicants' invention. Support for the amendments to independent claims 17 and 36 can be found at least at page 11, lines 11, 19, and 20, and page 16, lines 11, 18 and 20, of the specification, and in Figs. 4 and 6. No new matter has been added by this Reply.

Regarding the objection to the specification, Applicants have amended the specification at page 9 to correct the alleged informality. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to claim 32, Applicants have amended claim 32 to depend from claim 29, thereby correcting the alleged informality. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objection to claim 32 be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 17 and 36 provided in the outstanding final Office Action because the cited prior art fails to disclose or suggest each element recited in independent claims 17 and 36. For example, Sperling et al. and Korenage et al., do not teach or suggest, among other things, a stage assembly comprising a base having an upper side supporting a stage and an actuator disposed adjacent to a side outer surface of the base to generate a correction torque about an axis perpendicular to the upper side of the base.

Sperling et al. discloses a positioning device having X-actuators (45, 47) and Y-actuators (49), a support body (43), and a carrier (67), as shown in Figs. 1-3. Sperling et al. further discloses anti-drift actuators (73, 75, 77) fastened to the carrier (67) and exerting anti-drift forces to prevent the support body (43) from drifting towards an edge of the carrier (67). However, as indicated on page 3 of the final Office Action, in lines 16-18, "Sperling et al. does not disclose the actuator for generating the correction torque located on the side outer surface of the base".

Korenage et al. discloses a stage apparatus having a movable stage (1), a base (2) having a reference plane, and rotating mechanisms (4x, 4y), as shown in Fig. 1. Korenage et al. further discloses preventing production of an angular acceleration about an X-axis and a Y-axis in the stage by controlling a motor of the rotating mechanisms (4x, and 4y). See col. 5, lines 60-66, and col. 6, lines 1-26. However, the rotating mechanisms (4x, 4y) do not generate a correction torque about an axis perpendicular to the reference plane of the base (2).

To the extent that a fifth rotating mechanism (4z) of Korenage et al. may be interpreted as the recited actuator, it is not disposed adjacent to a side outer surface of

the base (2). As shown in Fig. 6, Korenage et al. discloses a fifth rotating mechanism (4z) producing a moment around an axis at right angles to the reference plane. See col. 6, lines 37-49. However, as shown in Fig. 6, the fifth rotating mechanism (4z) is centrally positioned, within base (2). Accordingly, even if the fifth rotating mechanism (4z) could be interpreted as the recited actuator, it is not disposed adjacent to a side outer surface of the base (2).

For at least these reasons, both Sperling et al. and Korenage et al., relied upon separately or in combination, fail to render obvious the invention defined in independent claims 17 and 36. Accordingly, Applicants request the rejection of independent claims 17 and 36 be withdrawn.

For the same reasons as above and because of their dependency upon independent claims 17 and 36, the rejections of claims 18-22, 23-29, 31-35, 37-41, 42-48, 50-52, and 76-79 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.

In addition, Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 19, 23-26, 38, 42-45, and 76-79 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) because the cited references fail to disclose or suggest an actuator for generating correction torque located at the side outer surface of the base. See page 3, lines 16-18, of the final Office Action (paper no. 11).

The outstanding Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization of the Office Action.

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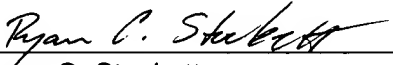
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Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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